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Workforce Development
(CEWD) ©**

Focus on Best Practices

CEWD's Implementation Checklist for Members: Where Is Your State and What's Next?

As state consortia strive to meet their goals for filling the energy workforce pipeline, CEWD continues to provide the tools and resources they'll need to move as smoothly as possible through this process.

"Our big focus this year is on implementation," said Valerie Taylor, Educational Consultant for CEWD. "We have many tools available to help state energy consortia move to the next level, and we're trying to make it easier for them to do just that."

Recognizing that states are in various stages of progression in moving toward their strategic goals, and that there is now a wealth of information available to consortia that might be tough to keep track of, CEWD has developed an "Implementation Checklist" that outlines each of the four strategic pillars and the steps needed to successfully complete goals in each one.

The checklist breaks down tasks into the four pillars: Structure and Support, Workforce Development and Education, Career Awareness, and Workforce Planning. For each pillar, there are three levels of progress: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. For example, a state that is at the Basic level in Career Awareness would be working on identifying resources on the CEWD website that can be used during Careers in Energy Week, or local workforce development or military organizations in their state with which they might consider partnering. Those at the Intermediate level would be forming those partnerships and promoting Careers in Energy Week. And those at the Advanced level would be offering Careers in Energy Week activities and supporting Troops to Energy Jobs employers in the state.

"States will be at all different places," said Taylor. "They may be at a Basic level in one area and Advanced in another. The idea behind this checklist is that you can go through here and see what you've already done and then set goals as to where you should go from there."

The checklist will be made available to members online by the end of October, along with the supporting resources and materials that will help them achieve each step. CEWD's website will also ultimately be reorganized to make it easier to find those resources, Taylor said.

"You'll be able to find resources for each of these action items," she said. "They are available online now, but in the future we'll make it even easier to link directly to them."

For more information, please contact Valerie Taylor at valerie@cewd.org.

Two Birds, One Pilot: Michigan Utilities to Test Natural Gas Boot Camp and Increased Veteran Recruiting This Fall

A training program that prepares workers—mainly military veterans—for jobs in the utility industry will launch this fall in Michigan, including a natural gas boot camp developed in partnership with the Midwest Energy Association, as well as the theory that military veterans can easily transition to careers in energy.

“What we’re trying to do is vet the natural gas boot camp model and provide military veterans with some training to see how well they learn and adapt, to give them a leg up transitioning into the utility industry,” said Ray Kelly, Director of Safety and Technical Training at DTE Energy. DTE Energy, along with Consumers Energy, will launch the training program October 1 in anticipation of hiring successful graduates early next year.

“We are not necessarily looking for an overlap in skills, but an overlap in competencies,” he said. “We want to see if they can learn what they need in a short period of time and hopefully become great employees. I also think it’s an awesome social responsibility on our part, to help veterans find jobs.”

Michele Forcier, senior employee development consultant for Consumers Energy, said her company joined the pilot program because it fit with the company’s hiring needs. “What we hope to see are some candidates who have been exposed to the natural gas side of the business, who come in with some work credentials,” she said. “At the same time, we hope to help the veteran population obtain employment.”

Kelly said two boot camps would run simultaneously. Approximately 25 students, who are mainly unemployed or underemployed veterans, will attend a camp in the northern part of the state. Upon successful completion of the program, they would be considered for a maintenance fitter apprenticeship program at DTE. Another 20 students, also composed largely of veterans, will attend a camp in the southern part of the state. Consumers Energy would consider hiring them as gas utility workers.

Between the two utilities, Kelly said, they hope to hire more than 50 percent of the program’s graduates. Those that aren’t hired directly by utilities will have the skills to seek similar positions at other companies.

The boot camp portion of the program runs for about six weeks and features instructor-guided lessons and hands-on practice. The training incorporates CEWD’s four-week Energy Industry Fundamentals certificate program, blending instructor-led and web-based material, Kelly said. Both companies are currently determining which parts of the boot camp curriculum best fit their needs.

Students are being recruited through partnerships with the Veterans Administration and Michigan Works!, a workforce development association. Other partners in the program include the Midwest Energy Association (MEA), Schoolcraft Community College, and Alpena Community College.

“This pilot is part of a larger effort promoted by the Michigan Utility Workforce Development Consortium,” said Rick W. Legleitner, Manager, Employee Development and Skilling at Consumers Energy. “The purpose of the consortium, in concert with Michigan community colleges, MiWorks! agencies, and the Michigan Workforce Development Agency, is the creation of a diverse pool of competent employees for the Michigan utility industry. This pilot has the potential to be an important component in this effort.”

Michele Kirkland, Vice President, Energy Operations at Consumers Energy, said “This is a key workforce preparation and development opportunity and fits our vision of having a diverse pool of qualified students that can move from school to work.”

For more information, please contact: Rick W. Legleitner at Consumers Energy (e-mail rwlegleitner@cmsenergy.com or call 810-760-3493); or Ray Kelly at DTE (e-mail kellyrd@dteenergy.com).

Focus the Nation Partners with Utilities to Focus on Energy Careers

Every summer, college students from all over the U.S. fly to Portland, Oregon, to spend one week learning about energy issues at ReCharge! —a retreat on the flank of nearby Mt. Hood, hosted by Focus the Nation (FTN), a clean energy leadership development organization, and sponsored by Portland General Electric (PGE), Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and KEEN Footwear. At this retreat, the students learn about energy issues and the different skill sets needed for energy-related careers. They also gain insight into how to assess and analyze issues that are driving change in the energy industry, and develop a sense of the complexities involved in integrating new renewable energy technologies into existing energy portfolios.

The magnitude of the challenge utilities face in supplying clean, reliable power to customers at an affordable cost is brought home to the students while touring PGE's Biglow Wind Farm and Boardman Coal Plant (slated to stop burning coal in 2020), and also The Dalles Dam, which supplies Columbia River hydropower to BPA customers. Throughout the tour, students get a first-hand look at operations, safety, and technical efficiencies, as well as a thorough overview of energy generation, transmission, and economic impacts.

"The energy industry is changing and we need smart, engaged young people who understand the complexity of this business and what's at stake as we balance competing priorities," says Sunny Radcliffe, PGE's director of government affairs. "I applaud FTN for helping to prepare new leaders through this program. We need many more young people to be a part of the transition to a reliable, sustainable energy future."

The energy tour during the ReCharge! retreat is just one of the ways PGE partners with Focus the Nation. PGE, along with other utilities like Xcel Energy, have participated in FTN's Forums-to-Action (F2A) program. F2A is a campus-based program active on more than 50 campuses across 36 states that prepares students for careers in energy. Utilities like PGE and Xcel have supported F2A by providing guest experts, industry insight, and career opportunities for FTN students. FTN will be taking part in PGE's Careers in Energy Week this year, sharing a video with high school students about an FTN student team using their STEM skills to drive energy solutions. FTN students will be on the judging panel for a high school student essay contest.

"I think the real opportunity we have here is to take these high school students who are gearing up for energy careers and plug them in to the work Focus the Nation is doing," said Maureen Fallt, organizational development consultant at PGE. "FTN is really helping to equip students for careers in energy," she said. "They are just a perfect match for what we're trying to do in our own workforce development efforts."

The 2012-2013 Forums-to-Actions program began on September 12th, but utilities can still partner with this year's campuses. Participating campuses can be found on Focus the Nation's website. If there are no local campuses, utilities are encouraged to contact Focus the Nation for partnership opportunities in the 2013-2014 academic year.

"We are building critical thinking skills for students to help them segue into the energy sector" through the analytical projects they conduct, Jessica Earley, Programs Director at FTN, said. "Students need to understand how utilities function," she said. "We are giving them a baseline knowledge about energy."

To learn more about Focus the Nation and partnership opportunities for utilities, contact Programs Director Jessica Earley at 503-224-9440 or Jessica@focusthenation.org.

Troops to Energy Jobs: Mentoring Veterans at Dominion Power

Dominion Virginia Power is piloting a mentoring program for veterans hired in Virginia since the launch of its Troops to Energy Jobs program in September 2011. Once the pilot program has been fully developed, the company would like to expand the program to other business units as well.

Matt Kellam, Supervisor, Strategic Staffing for Dominion, said veteran employees who wish to take part in the mentoring program must complete an application and are then screened for their suitability as mentors. They must meet the following criteria:

- Three or more years of military experience
- Two or more years working at Dominion
- A good knowledge of Dominion and its businesses
- The ability to listen to and accept different points of view
- The flexibility to commit to at least one year of working with a new employee
- Supervisor approval to participate

Newly hired veterans who are seeking mentors go through an intake meeting, Kellam said. “Mentors and mentees are matched based on information gathered from the application and the intake meetings.”

Once matched, the mentor serves as a short-term advisor, coach, and role model assisting with the long-term development of the mentee, he said. It also provides newly hired veterans with a confidante who can relate to veteran-related orientation, transitioning, and other issues that may arise related to having worked in the military.

Dominion expects the relationship to last at least three months on a formal basis, but hopes that the mentor and mentee will stay in touch long afterward. A mentee may also “re-enter” the program upon completion of those three months, Kellam said, and mentors may partner with additional mentees once the initial three months have passed.

“A clearly defined and well-executed mentoring program is a key component in career development and succession planning here at Dominion,” said Frank Hinckle, Director, Human Resource Services. “We feel strongly that leveraging our own employees as internal experts is a win-win for the mentee, mentor, and organization as a whole.”

CEWD has developed a comprehensive toolkit for starting or improving upon mentoring program for Veterans, available for CEWD members at <http://www.cewd.org/troops.asp>.

CEWD Summit to Offer Members Assessments on Four Key Pillars

The 2012 Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) Summit, to be held in Arlington, VA, November 14-16, will provide members with a new tool this year—an assessment to measure how far along they are in each of four strategic pillars: Career Awareness, Workforce Development and Education, Workforce Planning, and Structure and Support. “The assessment was developed to ultimately help participants implement solutions based on their specific needs,” said CEWD’s Rosa Schmidt.

During this year’s Summit, participants will have the opportunity to take part in more action planning focused on these specific needs. The program will open with a keynote address by Susan Story, President and CEO of Southern Company Services, Inc., and Chair of CEWD, to follow with numerous panel discussions and roundtables. The panel discussions will provide insight into what members are doing at all stages of implementation, including those who are just starting with new initiatives to those who are in the advanced stages. Topics cover areas such as women in nontraditional jobs, career

pathways, pipeline strategies, and workforce planning. Built into the sessions are structured roundtable discussions that will encourage sharing of successes and challenges around each topic.

Participants will also hear the latest about the Get into Energy Career Pathways for low-income young adults and the Troops to Energy Jobs programs. And Jane Oates, Assistant Secretary of the Education and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor, will provide her annual Summit address on national and legislative initiatives and their impact on the energy industry.

To register for the Summit or to see a copy of this year's agenda, please visit https://netforum.avectra.com/eWeb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=CEWD&WebCode=EventDetail&evt_key=32183f6d-b49a-46d6-9442-32872830a5cd.

Upcoming

CEWD Annual Summit

November 14-16, 2012

Arlington, VA

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